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BOB DYLAN
Australian Tour
April 1966





REVOLUTIONS PER MINUTE

A previously unknown live recording from Bob Dylan's 1966 Australian tour has emerged. Our correspondents have heard it. Here they explore the background to that April 13 Sydney concert and review the remarkable audio document of the event.

BOB DYLAN IN AUSTRALIA, FIRST TIME AROUND "...IT COULD EVEN BE LIKE A MYTH..."

These words which Bob Dylan bellowed from the stage each night on his first world tour in 1966 could just as easily have been describing the folklore of half-truths and exaggerations which surround these concerts. The tour was to be recognized as a watershed in the development of "rock" music, the interface where folk met rock 'n' roll met r 'n' b met surrealist poetry, where a pop concert became a piece of performance art and the audience unwittingly helped perpetrate acts of dada absurdity. Inevitably, with a hungry, uncomprehending media in attendance and an audience unprepared for the alchemy being practised onstage,

controversy, confrontation and misinformation ruled. In the 33 years since that tour, the legend has grown rather than faded.

As we all know, in 1998 Sony released Live 1966, a 2 CD recording from that 1966 tour. Known as the 'Royal Albert Hall' concert (although actually recorded at Manchester Free Trade Hall on May 17), it contains the famous confrontation with an angry fan whose cry of 'Judas' articulated a sense of betrayal felt by fans who wanted Dylan to remain a folk protest singer. That Manchester recording, evidence to the daring and majesty of the music Dylan and the band were creating, has been the only line recording of a complete 1966 concert available to mere mortals.

The official fanfare surrounding the release of Live 1966 was perhaps only surpassed by the outpouring of praise and attention it received from critics and fans worldwide. Much bootlegged since tapes began to circulate in the late sixties, the Sony release was welcomed not only for its sonic superiority, but for the fact that at last the world in general would be able to hear for themselves what Dylan aficionados had known all along.

In a remarkable twist of fate, alerted by the publicity surrounding the official release of the Manchester recording, the man who cried 'Judas!' all those years ago belatedly recognized his notorious role in the mythic events of that night and came forward to tell his story. Amid a plethora of commentary in magazines, radio, TV and on the internet, the confrontational aspects of the tour were highlighted. This was not only the 'Greatest Rock Tour in History', but an iconoclastic artist in conflict with an audience unprepared for the challenge of change in his art. Comparisons were even made with the debut performance of Stravinsky's Rite of Spring in 1913, when an audience of outraged Parisians was alleged to have rioted.

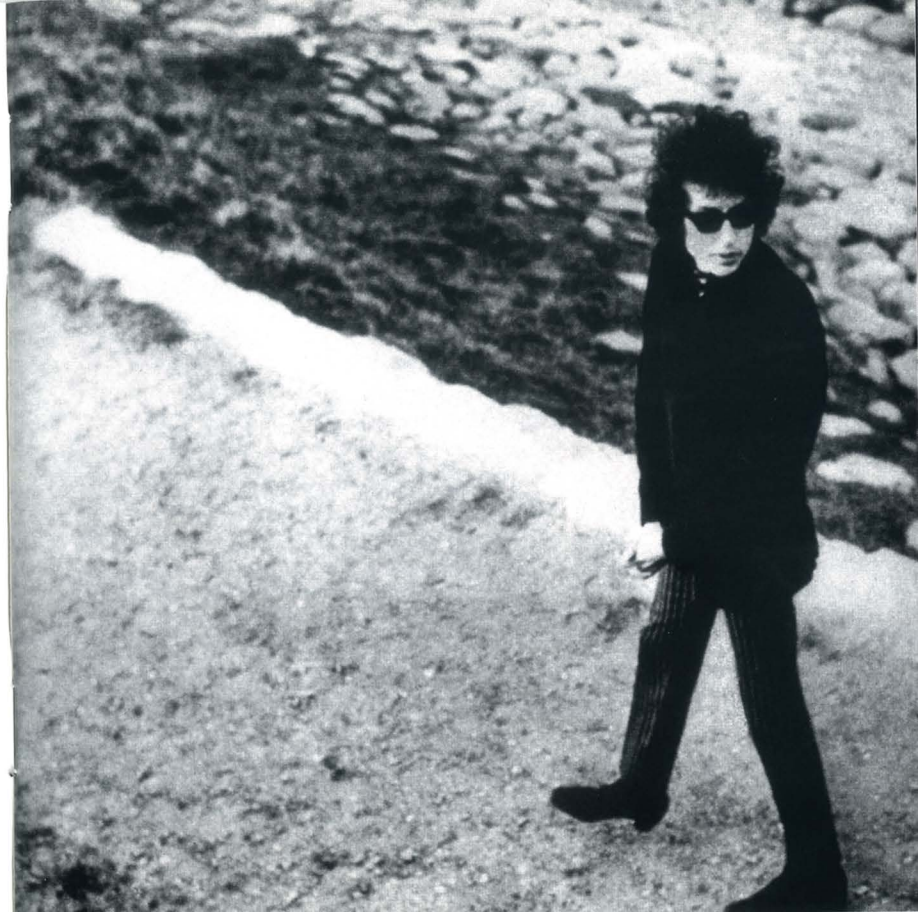
**"...IT USED TO GO LIKE THAT,
NOW IT GOES LIKE THIS..."**

The beginnings of the 1966 tour were less dramatic, and certainly less fabled. What do we hear of the twenty-plus concerts in February

and March in the US, beginning in White Plains, NY, criss-crossing the country, with excursions to Canada. In comparison to the later European dates, very damn little, as Kinky Friedman might say. Only that "the sound is horrendous" in Vancouver, or that Dylan was "apparently well received" in Lincoln, Nebraska. A show in Tacoma, Washington on March 30 is the last of the dates in the continental United States. After a week in Los Angeles, fitting in some rehearsal with new drummer Mickey Jones, along with finalising the mix for Blonde on Blonde and approving the release cut of Don't Look Back, Dylan and the band flew to Hawaii on April 8, where a concert in Honolulu the next night marked the beginning of Dylan's first 'world tour'. But Hawaii is still in the USA. Embarking on April 10 from Honolulu, after crossing the International Date Line, Dylan and his entourage landed in Sydney, Australia, on 12 April. They definitely weren't in Kansas anymore.

**DYLAN AND THE AUSTRALIAN MEDIA
"I JUST DEAL IN TERROR. I BUY IT,
SELL IT AND MAKE A PROFIT."**

From that first day, at a press conference at Sydney's airport, the Australian media were to reveal in their dealings with Bob Dylan, with few exceptions, a staggering degree of incomprehension, stupidity and downright viciousness. In a climate of national anxiety over the



“generation gap” and the rising tide of protest at Australia’s rapidly escalating involvement in the Vietnam war, and a general mood of anti-authoritarianism among “the young people”, Dylan was perhaps a target tailor-made for the representatives of a parochial, conservative press. For reasons unknown he chose to make himself available to the media and conducted numerous press conferences. Reporters arrived with a set agenda which ran like this. Dylan was a protest singer, he made a lot of money, therefore he must be a phoney. In addition, he was American and he was “funny-looking”. This seemed to be the sum total of knowledge about Dylan which most journalists brought to their meetings with him. Some of the questions at Sydney that day:

“How does it feel to be a popular hero?”

“Are you a professional beatnik?”

“Why do you wear those outlandish clothes?”

“Does it take a lot of trouble to get your hair like that?”

“Why have you gone commercial?”

Of course, pop stars were supposed to react with a sort of bright, boyish naivety to the probes of the “sophisticated” journalists. The Beatles had made themselves very popular in Australia in 1964 with their boyish charm and scouse wit. Their press conferences were a happy conjunction of a curious but supportive

media and a band of cheerful, cheeky, if somewhat sardonic, Englishmen. They weren’t “Royals” but they were from “the old country” and they were nice lads, weren’t they, in their suits and ties?

Dylan’s relationship with the press was vastly different. He was just one man, with the attentions of an openly hostile media focussed on him alone. The atmosphere was aptly described in an article in the Adelaide University magazine titled ‘Dylan And The Press Gang’:

My impressions of Dylan were formed in the space of half an hour, from his handling of the Press, his tone of voice, general attitude and appearance, and can perhaps best be conveyed through quoting a series of comments he made to different members of radio and television staff:

PRESS: What made you decide on this sort of music for your career?

DYLAN: It’s all I can do. I can’t do anything else.

PRESS: We’ve heard a lot about you protesting about this, that and the other. Naturally you’re entitled to say you’re not protesting, but your lyrics suggest that there’s an air of protest...

DYLAN: Well, if they do... they do. If you wanna think they are, I’m not gonna argue.

PRESS: Deep down, you must have convictions about...





DYLAN: Nah! Deep down, there's nothin' but guts, intestines.

The reporter had approached Dylan with an air of superiority and proceeded to attempt to rub-bish the man by pretending that Dylan could not understand his questions. However, on this occasion, as on all others, Dylan was in a position of power and knew it. He was the master in charge. Thus, faced with the opportunity to play with the Press and their inane little questions, he did just that.

He searched for ambiguity in the questions asked him and deliberately misinterpreted them. He feigned ignorance, necessitating the repetition and rephrasing of many questions. And he picked up sentences and threw them back at his interviewers, often achieving satisfying results.

On some occasions, when someone stumbled across something that interested him, he would perhaps take the matter seriously, as when he was asked as to how, precisely, did he write his poetry? Dylan said, "I write the same way I drink a glass of water. You know, if you're thirsty, you drink a glass of water. If you're hungry, you eat. That's how I write."

The Press conference was a ludicrous and tedious affair, and in my opinion he handled it well.

Across the nation newspapers peddled the line that Dylan was an insincere protest singer. He was continually being asked to justify the sort of "finger pointing" songs he had stopped writing in late 1963. The press failed to grasp that he had moved on. Had they not heard his last three albums?

A few days later in Stockholm when Dylan was asked by Klas Burling about protest songs, specifically "The Times They Are a-Changin'", he seemed to bristle: "Let's not sit here and talk about myself as a protest singer or anything like that. I'm not trying to be a bad fellow or anything but I'd just be a liar or a fool to go along with all this business. I mean, I just can't help it if you're a year behind."

The Australian magazine *The Bulletin* was more like two years (and a thousand miles) behind. On April 16 *The Bulletin* ran a 1964 photo of Dylan on its cover with a story headed 'Folk: The Times, Are They A-Changin'? The article, a nasty piece by Charles Higham, questioned Dylan's sincerity. Obsessed with how much money Dylan made, Higham argued that folk music was now in the deadly grip of PR, with songs that stem 'from the feverish brains of the agent-manager-recording company complex'. Higham detested Dylan: 'The voice is a monotonous drone, like the sounds a man makes after sea-sickness. The songs go on and

on, as inexorably and tunelessly as water dribbling down a drain'. *The Bulletin* may have been aiming for a sophisticated, irreverent tone, but what comes across today is a shallow cynicism born of ignorance.

On the day of Dylan's arrival in Sydney, the afternoon tabloid *The Daily Mirror* cranked up the contempt, describing "America's singing poet au-go-go" as sulky and truculent:

DYLAN: Don't talk to me about a message, man. I don't have any message...Time magazine, Newsweek, Look, Life and the Ladies Home Journal call me a protest singer. But I'm no protest singer.

REPORTER: How do you describe yourself?

DYLAN: I don't. How do you describe yourself?

REPORTER: I have no idea but I don't have to sell your talent.

DYLAN: Neither do I.

Questioned about the civil rights movement, he replied 'I'm not pro-Negro, I'm not anti-Negro. I have no feelings I'd care to discuss with you'. (Dylan later told *The Sun-Herald* 'It's very fashionable to participate in the civil rights movement... I don't want to hear no more about Negroes'.)

Bewildered, the man from *The Daily Mirror* asked if there was a general theme behind his

songs. "Yes, they're all about the Second Coming". When did he expect the Second Coming? "When people don't wear clothes any more".

The following day The Daily Mirror's Ron Saw published a Dylan interview in his "Sydney" column, sarcastically labelling Dylan a "genius". Ron Saw had read somewhere that Dylan was a man of many moods - anger, loneliness, despair, consolation, fury. Dylan replied "I don't have any of those moods. Terror is my constant emotion. Terror of what? Well, that's like asking a happy man what he's happy about. I just deal in terror. I buy it, sell it and make a profit."

RON SAW: Would you describe yourself as a folksinger?

DYLAN: I wish that I could come under some classification. But I don't have to, so I don't. I try to fall in line. I try not to be noticed. But somehow it doesn't work. Who wants to be an oddball? I am a singer whose songs are about joyful subjects. Joyful prehistoric subjects... I don't sing songs with a message. A message is an insulting way of trying to put your paranoia across. Everybody asks me about messages. In England they asked me about messages. I'm here in Australia to sing songs and they ask me about messages. I don't think they know too well what I do... I don't think they know too much at all about me in this country.



In *The Sun*, another Sydney afternoon tabloid, Uli Schmetzer could make no sense of Dylan's behaviour, appearance or songs:

"Pygmy-sized, pallid-faced, with long fluffy hair, Bob Dylan is the latest and strangest of the new breed of mop-haired, anti-socialite, non-conformist, pseudo-beatnik comedians to invade Sydney. Asked what he did before he

scribbled songs and sung them, he said "I was a thief, cars, antennas, radios, you know". Ever caught? "Yes, once by a priest and he converted me and I became a folksinger".

Dylan was ridiculed on TV as well as in the press. He agreed to appear in an interview on Channel 9's *Tonight Show* with Don Lane, which one viewer has described as an "embar-

assment". "Dylan was pretty contemptuous of the whole thing" recalls another viewer. What followed the next night was a disgrace — Brian Henderson, the terminally square TV host of Australia's *Bandstand*, and Don Lane wearing a curly wig — engaging in a monosyllabic send-up of Bob Dylan which, according to an angry letter to *The Sun*, "was just a disgusting display of bad manners" and a "cruel treatment of other people's feelings".

A glance at Australian newspapers from April 1966 reveals how divisive the Vietnam war was, even in these early years of the conflict. Australia was dispatching troops, conscripting young men and its Prime Minister was about to declare that he would go "All the way with LBJ". Asked about the pacifist flavour of his songs, Dylan insisted he was neither anti-war nor a supporter of anti-war movements. The Melbourne press also tried to get Dylan to comment on the Vietnam war. When he refused they attacked him for his apparent indifference to social/political issues. Dylan said to Alan Trengove, who asked "Don't you really care?":

"I can't really tell you how I care. I just can't. They never ask me these questions in America. They tried to make a clown of me for three years and now I won't give interviews. I have been writing for fifteen years myself. I know reporters have to eat, but I won't let them use me. Sure I have a feeling about war, about

Vietnam. I feel it's ridiculous. But the morality doesn't worry me. I just don't care..."

To the Brisbane media, Dylan gave in and conceded that his songs had a message, but he couldn't say what it is for fear of offending people!

The Adelaide press labelled Dylan a 'folksy millionaire'. The insults culminated in this remarkable exchange at an Adelaide press conference:

REPORTER: Do you make money a yardstick? Or doesn't it matter to you at all, money?

DYLAN: Make money a yardstick?

REPORTER: In life. Do you think having a lot of money is a good thing, or doesn't it worry you at all... I mean you must have a lot of money by singing the songs you do. Do you sing songs because you can make some money out of this, or do you sing just because you like to sing the songs and money doesn't mean anything at all?

DYLAN: I consider that an insult, sir.

By the time he got to Perth for his final Australian concert, no wonder Dylan was getting tetchy. After the concert Dylan and his entourage ("they're all friends of my grandmother") were stranded in Perth for a couple of days because the Australian government commandeered commercial aircraft to fly its troops

to Vietnam. At a Perth press conference he was again asked 'What do you think of the Vietnam War?' 'Nothing', he replied. 'It's Australia's war'. 'But Americans are there'. 'They're just helping the Australians'.

After escaping Perth, the tour which Dylan later described to Mary Travers as "ferocious" rolled on to Sweden, Denmark, Ireland, England, Wales, Scotland, France and on to the Royal Albert Hall. It must have been quite a relief to escape Australia and its mean-spirited media morons.

THE SYDNEY STADIUM "THERE WERE SCREAMING SOUNDS INSIDE THE BARN"

In his 1998 book *Like the Night: Bob Dylan and the Road to the Manchester Free Trade Hall*, C P Lee reveals that during the American leg of the 1966 tour, Dylan debated with his manager Albert Grossman whether he should play in theatres or large arenas in Australia. Grossman persuaded him that Australia, being "underdeveloped", did not have enough concert halls, so arenas it had to be. Although he had been warned about our primitive facilities, nothing could have prepared Dylan for Sydney's bizarre Stadium.

Officially a boxing arena, it looked more like a huge shed. Constructed in 1908 as a "tempo-



rary” structure for a world title fight, its design was basic — the builders simply “put some bleachers out in the sun”. On Boxing Day (yes, that’s right) 1908, the Canadian Tommy Burns accepted 6,000 pounds to defend his heavy-weight title against Jack Johnson, the first African-American to try for a world title in the class. Johnson completely overpowered the champ and was declared the winner when police stopped the bout in round 14.

In 1911 a roof was added to the Stadium, which housed boxing matches for the next sixty years. When the flamboyant promoter Lee Gordon began touring American rock ‘n’ roll stars in the mid 1950s, he turned the Stadium into Sydney’s prime entertainment venue. The “old barn” had one only virtue — it could seat 11,000 people (some say 12,000). Whatever the exact capacity, it was more than any other venue in the city. According to Dylan’s drummer Mickey Jones, it was the largest venue on Dylan’s 1966 world tour.

The interior was cavernous and stark. Bob Hope described it as “like Texas with a roof”, a statement curiously echoed in Dylan’s reply when Craig McGregor asked him how he found Sydney. Performing there “makes me feel right at home, man. Just like Texas.” Performers had to walk or run down an aisle to reach the stage. The floors were concrete, the walls galvanised iron. The ambience was of gladiatorial combat

and the dressing room stank of liniment from boxer rub-downs.

Seating was on ascending plank bleachers surrounding the boxing ring in the centre. Lee Gordon replaced the ring with a small revolving stage, thus giving everyone an equally poor view. Within the square stage was a disc which rotated. According to Johnny O’Keefe’s guitarist Lou Casch, who performed there many times, the revolving stage was controlled manually by an operator.

At the Dylan concerts the stage was turned a quarter of a revolution between each song. On the Sydney tape you can hear the delays between each song as Dylan waits for the stage to move into its next stationary position.

Performers were faced with a constantly changing audience, “brand new people” as Dylan says after a turn of the stage. In 1954 Johnnie Ray found it most disconcerting, since no one bothered to tell him he’d be working in the round. Some acts nearly fell over, as the motion was anything but smooth. On one occasion Guy Mitchell was standing with his guitar when he placed one foot on the outer, non-revolving perimeter, causing him to do the splits involuntarily.

Among the other stars who went spinning madly around the Stadium’s stage, many had

Dylan connections — Frank Sinatra, Little Richard, Buddy Holly, Johnny Cash, the Everly Brothers, Rick Nelson, Roy Orbison, Peter Paul & Mary and the Beatles, to name a few. The Stadium was demolished in 1973 to make way for a new train line to Bondi.

THE SYDNEY CONCERT REVIEWS “...I’D GLADLY CONFESS TO ANYTHING I MIGHT HAVE TRIED”

Given the hostility and misunderstanding of the press, reviews of Dylan’s first Sydney concert, on April 13 at the Sydney Stadium, were predictably mixed. The next day The Sun published a cartoon depicting Dylan as a strange visitor from another planet. Beneath the cartoon appeared a review with the headlines “Sydney’s wackiest concert” and “Kook or genius?” Opting for cheap shots, the reviewer made fun of the lyrics to ‘Desolation Row’ and tried to make Dylan’s audience appear as idiots by quoting a ringside fan: “You don’t have to know the precise meanings. Dylan makes a person think even if that person doesn’t know what he is thinking about”.

Curiously, the same edition of the same paper carried a more favourable review by Joe Cizzio, who described the 13 April concert as “a rare blend of integrity, artistry and intellectualism”:

“Dressed like a Pickwick character in a suit of black and brown houndstooth pattern, he





looked somewhat angelic with his long curly hair and pallid complexion, but there was an unmistakable virility about him... On the first half of the program Dylan was withdrawn, unresponsive, even monotonous, and appeared to have a great weariness for one so young and yet there was a magic about him."

Cizzio reported that the second half was marred because "the volume of sound swamped the sense of his lyrics". Certainly the sound volume came as a shock to many. Terry Darmody, a fan who sat in the front row at ringside for both of the Sydney concerts, remembers the small stage and "a lot of equipment. More sound equipment than anyone had ever seen".

Edgar Waters in *The Australian* also disliked the volume and was less bewitched than bewildered: "It was an ugly factory noise set to a factory rhythm, and Dylan's voice took on a new quality as though he were shouting - though I suppose he was not actually shouting - above this mechanical din... The total effect on me was rather like that of listening to an hysterical woman screaming at the top of her voice..."

Craig McGregor's balancing review appeared in *The Sydney Morning Herald*:

"At Sydney Stadium last night Bob Dylan confirmed, as his records had already made clear, that so far he is the only singer who has been able to perform his songs and retain that abrasive, uncomfortable directness which disappears as soon as others (pace Peter, Paul and Mary) attempt them".

McGregor wrote of Dylan's "life-enhancing" quality, his "virtuoso harmonica blowing"

and the "joyousness" of his performance with the band. The Sydney recording allows us to hear this performance and partake of the joy for ourselves.

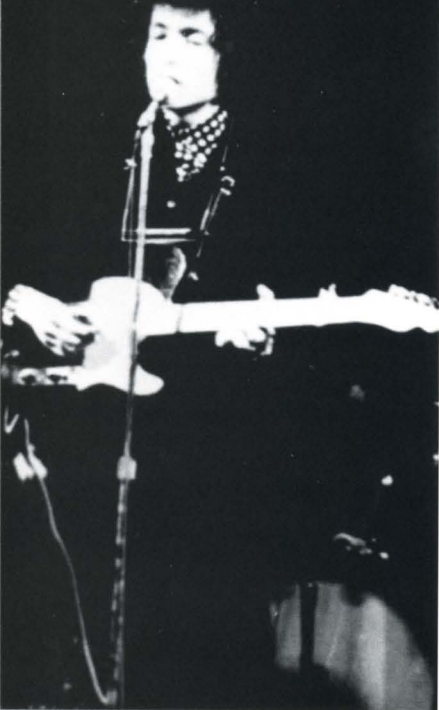
For years there has been some confusion about how many shows Dylan played in Sydney. Most of the evidence indicates that he played at the Sydney Stadium on Wednesday April 13 and Saturday April 16, with a Brisbane date (April 15) in between. Craig McGregor's piece about the Sydney concerts, written in the early 1970s and published as an introduction to his groundbreaking anthology *Bob Dylan: A Retrospective*, mentions hearing Dylan in concert in Sydney on two successive nights. This has fuelled speculation of an additional show on April 14. Similarly Mickey Jones is adamant that they played on consecutive nights, April 13 and 14. He remembers that "the first night was sold out and there was an overflow of people". To add to the confusion, the Dylan expert Glen Dundas lists April 13 and 14, while Michael Krogsgaard lists April 13 and 16. Adverts for the concerts in the newspapers and the weight of anecdotal evidence suggest that Krogsgaard is correct. And there is now solid reason to doubt McGregor's recollection, always problematic, of Dylan playing "The Times They Are a-Changin'" at the first Sydney concert.

THE SYDNEY RECORDING "STAND INSIDE MY SHOES"

On April 13 the Sydney Stadium was packed. There were 11,000 eyewitnesses and each one seems to remember it differently. Some speak of the crowd being hostile and Dylan being upset. Others recall a comical Dylan. Now a remarkable tape has come along to shed a little retrospective light on these conflicting reports. It was discovered in the collection of ScreenSound Australia, the national archive of screen and sound, which recently put its catalogue on-line. The recording's original source is unclear. It is on two 10" reels of tape and, according to the label on the box, it was recorded on April 13 1966.

The tape contains the complete concert, except for most of the first verse of the first song "She Belongs to Me". One wonders if the same sound engineer was responsible for the missing first verse of this song on both Melbourne and Sydney recordings.

This tape is in mono and clearly not an audience recording. The vocal (and, consequently, the harmonica) is way up front in the mix. Perhaps all the sounds on the tape were recorded through Dylan's microphone. There are frequent audible pops and hisses, especially on the "p" and "s" vocal sounds. These are



accentuated by Dylan's confident, committed delivery. (This is consistent with Craig McGregor's recollection of complaining backstage to Grossman that "there's a popping, hissing sound in the mike when Bob's up close".) One is reminded of Jules Siegel's story of Grossman running on stage at more than one American concert to tell Dylan to stop eating the microphone, which was adding to the sound problems.

Despite this problem, it is a fine vocal performance. On the whole, the sound quality is very good for the first half and reasonably good for the electric half. It goes without saying that the performances are incandescent, rivetting and unique. While the overall quality of the recording is nowhere near as good as the stunning Live 1966, it does provide the only other example we have (so far!) of a complete line recording of a 1966 show and as such represents somewhat of a Holy Grail for Dylan fans. As Paul Williams writes in his "Performing Artist, Vol 1": "the time machine has not yet made its last trip". The completely unexpected discovery of this gem makes one wonder what other delights might be sitting on dusty shelves around the world, waiting to be unearthed.

The Sydney tape, the existence of which has until now not even been rumoured, adds

significantly to our understanding of how the 1966 world tour developed. The only previously known recording from the Australian leg is an incomplete Melbourne Festival Hall show of April 19 or 20, which surfaced in the 1970s and has been widely circulated. Clinton Heylin has written that one of the two Melbourne shows was broadcast on Australian radio [check: which radio station] and from this an acetate later emerged. One of the Melbourne shows was filmed for the Australian Bandstand TV program and it is thought that three songs from the electric set were broadcast on Bandstand in January 1967.

We can only guess as to why the Sydney show was recorded. Perhaps Dylan had it taped to hear how the band was shaping up? Mickey Jones remembers tapes of these shows but thinks they used the same tapes each night, wiping the previous concert. A more likely theory is that the Sydney show was also filmed for television. Perhaps the sound or picture quality was not adequate for broadcasting, so the TV people decided to film one of the Melbourne shows. If so, the Sydney tape might contain the audio from this footage. Terry Darmody remembers "at least one guy running around on stage with a movie camera or a television camera".

THE AUDIENCE

"YOU'RE RIGHT FROM YOUR SIDE"

In Melbourne Dylan taunted the folkies in the audience by explaining that the reason his borrowed acoustic guitar kept going out of tune was that it was a "folk music guitar". When he took the stage with the band for the second half of his concert, some of the folk purists booed and walked out, deliberately exiting towards the front and past the stage in a blatant show of disgust. The Melbourne recording reveals some of the same theatre of confrontation apparent in the UK shows. Newspapers reported that members of the audience walked out in Adelaide and booed in Perth.

Eyewitnesses remember people booing and walking out in Sydney too. David Pepperell, who saw Dylan perform in Sydney and Melbourne, recalls that "In the second half they went mad in Sydney, booing, catcalling and screaming. But it was the best concert I had ever seen. I don't think anything was ever that good again". One reviewer noted that 1000 or so people in the Stadium audience shifted restlessly and a few walked out. But one of the surprises of the Sydney recording is that it displays much less of the antagonism and confrontation that can be heard in the Manchester "Judas" concert. It is hard to hear what is going on in the crowd, but the repeated shouts of "Hard Rain" and Dylan's responses seem to suggest not outright hostility but a kind of comic tension.

Lex Marinos, who saw the concert, remembered that Dylan was “comically disoriented by the revolving stage. He would lurch to the side as the stage revolved and then wait for it to stop before resuming his position in front of the next section of the audience”. The tape reveals a bemused Dylan cracking jokes about the moving stage. After singing “4th Time Around” he replies to a comment from the audience with “Tell me when I get there”.

THE PERFORMANCE

“COME OUT ONCE AND SCREAM IT”

The acoustic set is sensational. The perfect beauty and almost crushing, naked vulnerability Dylan achieved with his solo performances in 1966 remains astonishing at each hearing. The first lines of “Mr Tambourine Man” and “Baby Blue” are recognised and greeted with warm applause. Dylan has no problems keeping his guitar in tune and there is little evidence of the cough that plagued the Melbourne concert 6 days later. He seems less stoned. In fact he sounds at times like a different person, vocalising differently and singing with a younger voice that at times echoes his second and third albums.

Performing solo seems much less of an effort than it became at Melbourne and in the UK. “Visions of Johanna” is no longer “Freeze Out” but still a few days from becoming

“Mother Revisited”. The acoustic guitar is played beautifully. Listening to the “harmonica which penetrated the vastness of that old barn” (as Lex Marinos has attested) reveals that McGregor was right and Dylan did play the harp that night “like a virtuoso”. After the acoustic set Dylan says “Back in 15 minutes” and, remarkably, that 15 minutes of intermission is on the tape. You can hear the murmur of the crowd and the cry of the Stadium’s lolly boys — “Ice cream, Drinks”.

Interestingly, the 2 minutes or so at the start of the electric portion of the tape, preceding the first song, allow us to hear the audience reaction to the appearance of these unknown musicians taking the stage with Dylan. They must have wondered who this guitarist was in the blue velvet suit, and why the piano player was wearing maroon. As they appear and begin to tune their instruments, the audience applauds. No evidence here of the hostile shouts which greeted their appearance on stage in later concerts, when the very sight of the electric guitars and amplifiers seemed to provoke the audience’s discontent.

In the electric set Dylan relishes in screaming and spitting out his lyrics with venom. It was reported that the band was loud and that the volume of sound swamped the sense of the lyrics, but on this tape it is the vocals which

dominate. The singing is in the foreground and the words are clear. The upfront vocals are somewhat startling, particularly in the opening song of the electric set. “Tell Me Momma” is just as forthright in its punk attitude, but this performance has more of the quality of a cocky garage band than the cacophonous majesty we are more familiar with from Melbourne and the UK. Its lyrics vary significantly from the UK version, with Dylan singing clearly of ‘cemetery grips’ and ‘your babydoll chest’. The clarity of the vocal on this tape emphasises the vaguely menacing lasciviousness of the lyrics. What a jolt this opening volley of the electric set was for the unsuspecting audience!

Given that the April 13 Sydney concert was Mickey Jones’ second gig with Dylan (Honolulu being the first), the band is tight, but perhaps not yet at the peak it reached a few weeks later in the UK. Dylan sets the tempo for each song with his rhythm guitar, which is slightly louder than on the Live 1966 CD, or by stamping his feet. Dylan’s familiar spoken introduction to “I Don’t Believe You”, ‘It used to go like that, now it goes like this,’ is heard once again at Sydney. In “Baby Let Me Follow You Down” we are treated to the ‘velvet shirt/gun that squirts’ rhyme we all know and love from the Melbourne tape. Garth Hudson’s organ punctuates the lyrics with witty flourishes. “Just Like Tom Thumb’s Blues” is preceded





begins outside of Mexico City and it ends really in uh, Des Moines Iowa' [laughs].

Throughout the Sydney electric set, Richard Manuel's piano is audible, a welcome improvement on most other 1966 concert recordings. His blues licks and strong left hand give "Leopard Skin Pill-Box Hat" a slightly different flavour, it becomes almost a New Orleans stroll. After a somewhat lengthy pause, with audible though indecipherable talking from both the band and the audience, "One Too Many Mornings" is another highlight. The strength and confidence of Dylan's vocal phrasing accords perfectly with the emphatic drumming of Mickey Jones. Paul Williams has said he believes that Jones' drumming may have made all the difference between the shows on the world tour and the ones that came earlier. He describes Dylan as "facing the drums and singing to them (musically if not literally)" and this song is a beautiful example of that centering of the performance on the voice and the beat.

The civilized savagery of "Ballad of a Thin Man" is as thrilling here as on other documents we have of its 1966 performances. Garth Hudson's swirling organ envelopes the sneering, aggressive vocal and Dylan's pounding piano chords underscore the verbal menace. The set list here is the same as Manchester except for the final number, which on this night

is not "Like a Rolling Stone".

Frequently in the electric set and again before the final song, somebody yells "Hard Rain!", the repeated calls for the song eliciting laughter from both audience and performer. Dylan responds, finally, by half mumbling, half singing these words: "Hard rain, I wish I saw some hard rain last night. Hard rain, hard rain, feel no pain. I'll be coming back tomorrow again. Is that alright?"

Then, amazingly, the merry, circus-like organ swirls which begin the last song signal an unexpected and delightful finale to this show. "Positively 4th Street" closes the electric set, disproving the notion that it was not played on this world tour after March 26 — another revelation. Dylan dramatically elongates the vowels and adds verbal flourishes to show us how much fun he's having. This vituperative song, performed with an ecstatic glee, is a fitting end to the concert.

What is perhaps just as surprising is the audience reaction and at least as much as we can hear on this tape - no jeers, no booing or cat-calls, just enthusiastic applause and calls for "More! More!". Dylan responds with a somewhat more sincere than usual "Thank you. Thank you very much. You're very kind. Thank you". The applause dies down then is rekindled

a few moments later. Perhaps after walking the aisle to make his exit from the boxing arena the champ turned to salute his supporters in the audience once more, just like Jack Johnson.

But here lies the mystery. Eyewitness testimony seems to contradict the audio evidence. From the back of the bleachers, David Pepperell saw it this way: "When Dylan came off the stage he had to walk back through the crowd. Somebody tried to shake his hand and he pushed it away. He was absolutely furious". Perhaps the truth lies in the middle. A backstage eye-witness to Dylan's state as he came offstage at the Manchester concert might give us a clue. He described Dylan as looking 'traumatized - like someone who'd just been in a car accident.' Was he simply drained, physically, by the ferocious creativity of these extraordinary performances? Many members of the audience loved the electric music Dylan was creating, while the less open-minded fans were left puzzled, disappointed or angry.

The Sydney recording reveals Dylan, at the height of his fame, forging a musical path into uncharted territory, and taking most of his audience along with him. It is a fascinating document which sheds light on the creative path that led to Melbourne, Manchester, the July motorcycle accident and Dylan's subsequent prolonged abandonment of concert tours.

by a quite lengthy spoken introduction, a variation on the "Mexican painter" monologue also used at other shows, most notably Melbourne. 'This is called... this is, uh... this, uh, story takes place in, uh, outside of Mexico City. Well, it